

Evolution of the Press and Mass Media

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Press as a Medium

Penny Press is one of the most significant presses of The United States of America in print history. It was popularly known for its affordable rates as compared to the other press and publications of the time. The other papers were sold at a rate of five to six cents in market. The emerging strategy of Penny Press was to be available at a very low rate in comparison to other brands; they managed to sell their paper only for a penny. The newspaper was circulated at base rates so it became affordable for lower classes; this was a revolutionary evolution which was noted to happen for the first time. Earlier newspapers were available exclusively for the upper class, but after the Penny Press came into execution newspaper became affordable for everyone. It augmented the awareness of news and existence of press throughout the nation. It was a change; well noted by the press, it was an eye opener. The press realized that the same news that interests the upper class is not of equal interest to the labor class. The source collection for the news material was from the public records, notably; the police, court, divorce, notary records. According to Fredrick Hudson the Penny Press had a major contribution to change the outlook of the press and availability of newspaper in the history of press. It was a revolution in the history of journalism in America. James Gordon Bennett and the introduction of New York Herald contributed a lot to the success of penny press.

Medium and Message

Marshall McLuhan talks about how the medium affects the message it transmits; the message becomes a reflection of the medium it is embodied in. The medium alters the perception the message that it incorporates. The popular phrase the medium is the message was published in 1964 by McLuhan in his book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* which was a huge success. He talks about the focus of the research should be the medium and not the message. The structure changes the outlook of the content to a great extent. The medium leaves an impact in the society where it is transmitted; it affects the perception; medium brings out its own distinct traits to the content it is added to. Medium has the potential to form and command the message. He further elaborates the concept beautifully by explaining that the content eventually becomes the medium for another medium. He talks about how our ideas and words are the content of an article, the article eventually becomes the content of a publication and the publication of a broadcast. The main idea could be summed up as: modern media is taking the shape of our senses.

Public Sphere

The public sphere can be defined as an area of social life where people can come together to discuss and identify social problems. It is a place where individuals and groups come up to discuss matters of mutual interest and reach out to a common judgment. The growth of public circles was noted back in the eighteenth century in the form of emerging coffee houses, clubs and recreation centers to give a platform to meet greet and discuss with the aim to regulate government agencies. The growth and extension of the public sphere was measured by the ability to communicate freely without any hierarchy. According to Jurgen Habermas, a public sphere is a local gathering for common people where they can voice their opinions. The secret behind the

success of public sphere was the right to equally participate and present the ideologies without any distinction of class and creed. The key to success of any argument is the strong skill used for communicating the idea. The objective of the gathering was to discuss different social issue, come to a final conclusion, present it to the political sphere and ask them to take charge of the situation. It was a movement to bring a change in the social sphere and be heard by the ruling body.

Mass Media

We have looked at the ways in which the mass media (especially print) have been understood to be interwoven with social, cultural, political and economic institutions and forces. We have looked at this in various terms: The relationship between the growth of capitalism (business) and print; the growth of newspapers, political developments and social changes. Using at least three different sources from class readings, one can explore one of these strands (or a different relationship that you want to discuss), giving both a general outline of the historical relationship. It is an introduction of how the media has affected the society by three great theorists namely Marshall McLuhan, John B. Thompson and Chapman. The growth of mass media brought a change to the social, financial religious political structure of the society. It gave a form to the religious stories by reforming them through the print medium and passing it on to the citizens of the nation. The availability of case study in printed form helped in the scientific progression and researches. The content was now accessible without much difficulty; such inventions played a major role in the overall growth and progression of all domains and brought a major change to the civilization.

Social Effect of Printing

In producing his ideas, Marshall McLuhan has used evidences selectively. He has ignored many factors which might weaken his case. One of the initial social effects of printing was: the traditional village storyteller disappeared completely. However, this did not have a dramatic impact as these figures were merely replaced by a literate reader who read aloud to the illiterate majority, so it did not create much harm. The material used for conveying the message was cheap printed books and ballads which were being produced in abundance at the time. The significance of this situation is that even after the invention of the printing press; the majority of the population received texts orally. This came out to be a great social impact over the society. The tradition of the storyteller may have died out but it was replaced by a similar and almost equally oral culture. It was not until after the Education Act of 1870

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which made education compulsory. In Britain at least we can say it has been truly dominated by print. This time difference from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries between the invention of the printing press and the creation of a print culture suggests that there were many other factors involved which affected the social surroundings. These relate to the changing cultural, political and economic climate and increasing industrialization which meant that even factory workers needed to be literate. This was a boom and a little disturbance in the social life of people. McLuhan chooses to ignore these factors but they suggest that the printing press was entirely responsible for the eradication of an oral culture and society. The printing press affected the social life and has various impacts on the society. The spoken words could be documented and added authenticity to the idea. The labor charges were cut down, it was a boom in the mass media. The manual writings were now printed and took lesser time for preparation a document. The theory of Marshal McLuhan has been questioned but his contribution was of a great value that helped in understanding the effect of the invention of the press and the changes it brought to the social life. The storytellers and the importance of communication in oral form did not vanish totally but the print brought a great change in the medium and people eventually got used to the printed material. The print took over the story tellers in a passage of time but not immediately and at full length. In 1870 a new act was introduced that gave importance to educate the generation, until then education was not obligatory. The range and effect of the print came to effect over a span of time; from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth. It was grown progressively and took time to eradicate the old ways. Even the labor class got educated and it became mandatory to employee only educated staff to work in big factories.

Progression of the Medium

With the progression of mode of communication from eighteenth century, the medium got a new form. This was the year of progression from print to digital and electronic media. The introduction of radio, television and internet advanced the medium and gave a new shape to the message.

Radio: At the commencement of 1920 there was a boom in the mass media in form of new advancement of the medium. The first official radio was set-up for NBC in 1926, with the emergence of radio the print market got affected by a large magnitude. People found listening to the news on radio much convenient than reading it on the print medium. It opened a new market for the illiterates who do not need to be a scholar to get up-to-date with what was happening around them. People found it less time consuming as they could listen to news on radio while working on something else. It was a new invention in the field of mass media but a big threat to the print medium.

Television: The medium of television brought a dramatic change to the message. The perception of content changed drastically with the latest invention. The message has a form and a picture that the people could see and relate to. This medium has been noted to gain a huge success one in the evolution of mass media. But later in mid 1940s, with the invention of television; radio and print medium lost its significance. The television as a medium had a lot to offer to the audience which radio and press were not capable of offering to the society. The network television did not come into existence until 1949; over a decade of time television ruled the market and it was found easily in the American households. It changed the world of the advertising market, television catered a larger mass of audience and it had been one of the most effective advertising medium.

Internet: With the invention of technology; computes came into

existence by 1950, but it was limited to the educational and government bodies. By 1970 it proved to be a good medium for the printing press. It helped the press to print material at reduced rates and helped to increase the readership. Internet as a medium was brought to existence in United States by the United States Department of Defense. The modern internet started by 1983 by ARPANET, the internet came to its full utilization by the early 1990; it was invented by a British man named Tee-Berners-Lee. Internet proved to be a friendly medium to the print. It is still considered to be one of the biggest markets for advertising agencies

The effect of Media on Society

Chapman has also talked about how the media holds an effect on the society. There are many examples to prove his point. He has mainly talked about the French Revolution and the freedom of Expression. How it has affected the society and the press. He even tells the differences between the American Press and The French Press. How they affected the society. Chapman has talked about the American Revolution and its effects. After such revolutions, the press finally found its long lost identity in the society. People started to take press sincerely and even started their active participation. The freedom of French was most remarkable in the period of 1789 to 1792. This was the time when the press stood out to be the most strongest. Newspapers were pasted on the walls and were easily available. The social life almost changed in that era. The news and the freedom of the press showed its true colours at the Coffee houses and the streets where people used to gather and discuss the latest happening, their ideas and opinions. This was seen as one of the greatest social reform at that time. He has mainly talked about the growth and effect of newspaper and its effect on the social life. He has taken the examples or we can say mainly talked about, France, Britain, America and Germany. The French revolution lost its effect in 1794-1815. The worldwide newspaper growth of local newspaper showed its growth from 1815 to 1847. Taking in consideration the popularity and the restrictions of press in all the four nations Chapman explained his theory of how the press controls the society. The press rules the society; it is a way to express the public voice and to let people express their views more clearly. Chapman showed how the freedom and restriction of the press can bring changes in the society. The press has been considered to be an important tool of self-expression throughout the history of the press. With the progression of technology many new inventions have been introduced namely; radio, television and the internet; they all have had a major effect on the society and influenced the message that it propagates. The medium keeps on changing and so does the perception of the message which is embodied. Through the evolution process of mass media we have seen a lot of changes in the way the message gets transmitted by the medium; the old and modern styles. The press still holds its significances; it is the mother of all inventions in the field of mass media.